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HOUSEKEEPERS' CHAT

Saturday, December 25, 1937

(FOR BROADCAST USE ONLY)

Subject: "CHRISTMAS GAMES." Information approved by the Extension Service, United States Department of Agriculture.

--ooOoo--

Merry Christmas, everybody. And once again, by request, your Aunt Sammy is saying it with games.

Games are one of the ways to make this day merry for everyone in the family. More than that, they help unite the Christmas guests. So when the children begin to grow restless after dinner, or the grown-ups become perhaps a little bored and sleepy, you can get the games going.

You don't have to wait until after dinner to play games either. Some games can start at the table.

For **example**, there's the menu game. Between courses, pass pencils and paper around the table, and tell your guests to write a Christmas menu using each letter in the word Christmas to start each word of the menu. Of course, the letters must be used in order -- C for cranberry cocktail, H for hot soup, R for roast turkey and so on. The winner is the first one to finish writing a menu. Or you can gather the menus, read them aloud to the group, and have a general vote on the best menu.

Another quiet game -- a good one to play right after a big meal, is a Christmas memory contest. The hostess -- who has planned these games the day before -- brings out a big stocking made of coarse net and filled with all sorts of odds and ends -- small articles like pencils and erasers, a paper cutter, a ball, a spoon and so forth. The guests have a chance to look over this stock- ingful for a few minutes. Then the stocking is taken away and at a given signal they all write down as many of the articles in the stocking as they can remember. Of course, the winner is the guest with the best memory. Both children and grown-ups enjoy this game. And sometimes the youngsters have better memories than their elders.

For more lively fun, you can arrange all sorts of active contests and races. Most children like a nut-shelling contest. Two groups stand in 2 straight lines parallel to each other for this contest. Several feet from the head of each line is a bag of peanuts. When the whistle blows to start the race, the first in line runs up to the bag, grabs a peanut, shells it, eats it, and goes to the end of the line. This continues until all the players have had a turn. The line finishing first wins.

If you have two different-colored neckties, old neckties ready to discard, or if you have two strips of cloth, red and green preferably, then you have all the equipment necessary for the game known as "Christmas ties." And here's how you play it. Choose sides and let the 2 sides form in 2 lines facing each other. The leader of each line takes a tie, one red and one green. At a given signal, each leader puts on his tie, ties it, turns and shakes hands with the player in back of him, and then as quickly as possible, unties his tie and passes it on to the person next to him who does the same. The line that finishes first wins. (You can understand why this game has a reputation for being very hilarious, can't you?)

The youngsters in the family always enjoy a candy hunt for diversion on Christmas afternoon or evening. Sometimes the grown-ups join in this fun, too. Needless to say, candies wrapped in paper or hard candies are the best for hiding. Count out a certain number of candies and hide them here, there and everywhere over the room. Then give each young player a little box or bag, and at the word: "Go," let them all start hunting for candies to fill their baskets. The child with the largest number of candies at the end of 10 minutes wins.

There's a Christmas version of the old game of pinning the tail on the donkey, if you have time to fix up a few things beforehand. Draw or cut out a picture of Santa Claus without his beard and fasten it on the wall. Then fix up a white beard of cotton. The object of the game is to pin a beard on Santa Claus while you are blindfolded. Each player is blindfolded in turn. Then he is whirled around 3 times. And finally the cotton beard and a pin is put in his hand. The player who succeeds in pinning the whiskers in the best position on Santa Claus' chin wins the game.

Marksmanship contests are fun, too. Fix up some imitation snowballs with cotton batting covered with transparent paper. Suspend a large wreath in an open doorway at a convenient height from the floor and have a little bell hidden in the wreath. Each player takes 3 snowballs, one marked 5, another 10, and a third 20. The players stand about 8 feet from the wreath and each in turn tries to throw his balls through the wreath. Those that go through are scored according to the number marked on them. Any player who accidentally hits the little hidden bell and makes it ring, receives an extra 25 on his score.

When the family grows tired of rough-and-tumble games, a puzzle box is an interesting diversion, especially delightful to children. This is something like the old grab bag or fish pond. Find all sorts of odds and ends around the house -- inexpensive gifts of various sorts, and wrap them up in packages that will give no clue to the contents. On a tag attached to each package write a cryptic description of the article inside -- a truthful description but a puzzling one. For example, the tag on a small mirror might read: "A place for reflection." A blotter might be labeled: "An absorbing subject." And a box of sixteen candies might be tagged: "Sweet sixteen." Arrange the packages on the table and give each player a pencil and card. Then ask them to write what they think each package contains, judging from the label. The best guesser wins. Of course, this game takes considerable time and thought in advance. But if you or someone in the household has a little spare time during the day before the games begin, you'll find the preparation well worth the effort because of the fun it gives the children.

Once again -- a Merry Christmas to all my listeners.
